

STATINTL

28 July 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

1. This memorandum is for information only.

2. The LONDON NEWS CHRONICLE's Washington representative, Joanna Lawrence, telephoned today to ask if CIA would comment on the story which appeared in the LONDON AMERICAN of this morning which claims U-2 Pilot Powers was not shot down but was forced to land due to his own "piloting error." The London paper said Powers had already been put through a mock trial as a rehearsal for the one scheduled to start on 17 August. It claimed that Powers radioed to another U-2 which was flying behind him that he was losing altitude and it states American officials believe he glided into a perfect belly landing. It also claims that the top ceiling of the U-2 is 110,000 feet. We had no comment.

3. A copy of the UPI's report of the LONDON AMERICAN story is attached.

STANLEY J. GROGAN
Assistant to the Director

Attach.

cc: DDCI w/attach.

UPI-92

(U-2)

CPYRGHT

LONDON--THE LONDON AMERICAN, A WEEKLY PUBLICATION AIMED AT AMERICANS IN BRITAIN, REPORTED TODAY THAT U-2 PILOT FRANCIS GARY POWERS WAS NOT SHOT DOWN BY THE RUSSIANS BUT WAS FORCED TO LAND DUE TO HIS OWN PILOTING ERROR.

IT GAVE NO SOURCE FOR ITS INFORMATION OTHER THAN THAT IT HAD BEEN GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT THE POWERS TRIAL FOR WEEKS FROM DIPLOMATIC SOURCES.

THE NEWSPAPER SAID POWERS HAD BEEN PUT THROUGH A "MOCK" TRIAL TO REHEARSE HIM FOR THE REAL ONE, SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN MOSCOW AUG. 17.

THE LONDON AMERICAN DENIED THE SOVIET CLAIM THAT THE U-2 WAS SHOT DOWN IN RUSSIA MAY 1 BY ROCKET FIRE AND SAID:

"POWERS' UNDOING WAS NOT SOVIET TECHNOLOGICAL SKILL BUT HIS OWN HUMAN ERROR. HE SWERVED TOO RAPIDLY...AT 90,000 FEET... IN CHANGING DIRECTION AND 'FLAMED OUT' HIS JET ENGINE.

" THE YOUNG PILOT FROM ALBANY, GA...RADIOED THE BAD NEWS TO A SECOND U-2 FOLLOWING BEHIND HIM. POWERS REPORTED THAT HE WAS LOSING ALTITUDE TO SECURE THE OXYGEN NECESSARY TO RE-IGNITE HIS ENGINE. HIS LAST WORD WAS THAT HE HAD REDUCED TO 40,000 FEET. AFTER THAT THERE WAS SILENCE--UNTIL KHRUSHCHEV BROKE THE NEWS OF HIS CAPTURE...

"POWERS COULD HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN AFTER LOSING HEIGHT BUT AMERICAN OFFICIALS DOUBT IT. THEIR VIEW IS THAT HE GLIDED INTO A PERFECT BELLY LANDING."

THE NEWSPAPER ALSO SAID IT HAD LEARNED THAT THE ACTUAL CEILING OF THE U-2 WAS 110,000 FEET--40,000 MORE FEET THAN HITHERTO REPORTED

REF-92 (CON*T)
CPYRGHT

THE ACCOUNT SAID THE SOVIETS WERE CORRECT IN ASSERTING THAT POWERS
MAILED TO CARRY OUT "SUICIDE" ORDERS FROM THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY.

"PRESUMABLY," THE NEWSPAPER SAID, "HE IGNORED C.I.A. ORDERS FOR THE
DOWN-TO-EARTH REASON THAT HE PREFERRED TO LIVE--AND QUICKLY DECIDED THAT
HIS BEST HOPE OF DOING SO WAS TO COOPERATE WITH HIS CAPTORS.

"THIS EXPLAINS WHY THE RUSSIANS ARE ABLE TO MOUNT THE BIGGEST SHOW
TRIAL IN SOVIET HISTORY--AND THE WORLD'S GREATEST SPY TRIAL--WITHIN
FOUR MONTHS OF POWERS' CAPTURE."

THE LONDON AMERICAN SAID POWERS' COOPERATION AT THE TRIAL WILL EXTEND
TO TELLING THE COURT "EVERYTHING HE KNOWS--AND A GREAT DEAL MORE."

IT SAID "MUCH OF POWERS' EVIDENCE WILL BE BLUFF AND CONJECTURE" AND
IT WILL INCLUDE ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT OF "SUCH AMERICAN ALLIES AS NORWAY,
TURKEY AND PAKISTAN."

7/28--E6206PED